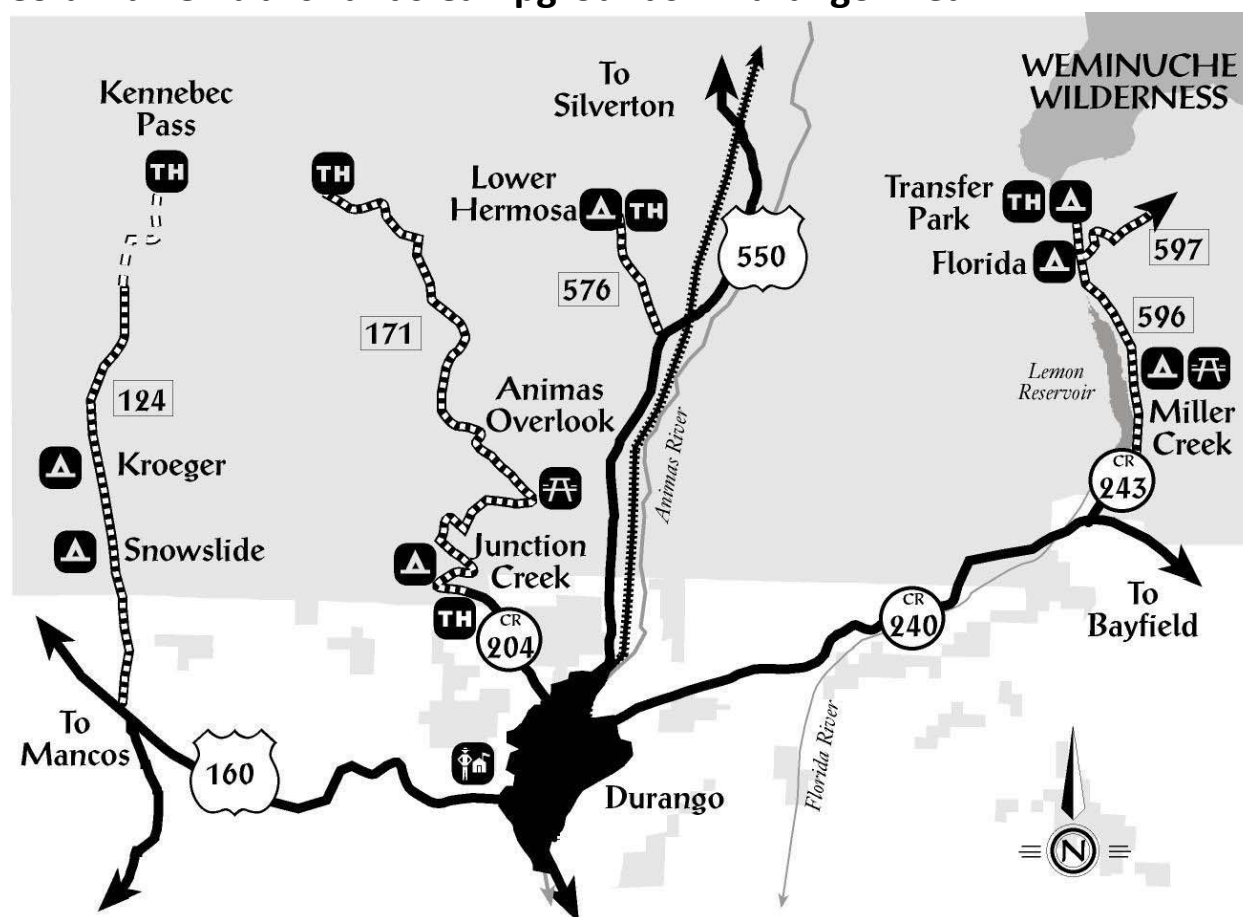


Columbine Public Lands Campgrounds – Durango Area



LEMON RESERVOIR

Lemon Reservoir, in the Florida River drainage, offers a less developed setting than the Vallecito Reservoir area. Drive 16 miles northeast of Durango on Florida Road (County Rd. 240) to County Rd. 243 (Forest Rd. 596). The road is paved as far as the dam. There is a small store south of the dam, but full services are in Vallecito, Durango, or Bayfield. Fishing is usually good. Most of the shoreline is fairly steep, except at the upper end. Only the east side of the reservoir is accessible by road. The sole boat launch is at Miller Creek Campground. Motorized boating is allowed.

• **MILLER CREEK CAMPGROUND** \$ C P Z * Ñ

Miller Creek Campground, about 2 miles north of the dam along Forest Rd. 596 (County Rd. 243), has a concrete boat ramp at its north end. Its 12 campsites offer a choice of sun or shade; 5 of the sites share a large parking area. RVs can be leveled without much difficulty. A shady roadside picnic area has 4 tables available for day use. The Upper Lemon Day-Use Area, a fishing-access site, is 1.5 miles north of Miller Creek.

• **FLORIDA CAMPGROUND** \$ C Z * (

The Florida Campground is 4 miles north of Miller Creek Campground above the reservoir, with 20 shaded campsites. Do not trespass on the private property adjacent to the south side of the campground. A few short pull-thru and back-in sites can accommodate larger RVs. Tent campsites are well-shaded and near the river. Large groups can reserve the Florida Group Area, just beyond the regular

camping area, which accommodates up to 75 people. The group area has 6 double tables, a buffet table, and 4 fire grates. RV parking is limited. Near the campground entrance, the East Florida Road (Forest Rd. 597) winds steeply uphill. The Lost Lake and Stump Lake Trails begin along this road, offering short, easy hikes to backcountry lakes.

• **TRANSFER PARK CAMPGROUND** \$ c Z * t

Transfer Park Campground is only 1 mile past Florida Campground, with 11 acres of shaded settings by the Florida River. This was the site of a historic transfer station for ore and supplies between pack mules and wagons in the mining era. Two loops have 25 sites with shade and sun, and large, open areas. The upper loop is mostly level, with several larger sites. The lower loop is near the river and has 2 larger sites, a few short pull-thru's, and several tent spots. Parking for the Burnt Timber Trail is near the campground. Hitching rails and an unloading dock for horses are available; however, horses are not allowed in the campground. This popular trail accesses the Weminuche Wilderness (where mountain bicycles and motorized vehicles are prohibited), with connections to the Lime Mesa, Mountain View Crest, and City Reservoir areas.

JUNCTION CREEK

The Junction Creek area, on the western edge of Durango, is very popular. Dispersed camping is not allowed from the Forest boundary to 8 miles up the Junction Creek Road, beyond the Animas Overlook. Motor vehicles must stay on open roads. The southern terminus of the 469-mile Colorado Trail, linking Durango to Denver, may be accessed at the Forest boundary, at the sharp turn just below the campground, or farther up off the Campion Venture Road. The lower portions of the Colorado Trail are heavily used by mountain bikers and day hikers. The Log Chutes Trail System, popular for mountain bicycling, is just beyond the Junction Creek Campground.

• **JUNCTION CREEK CAMPGROUND** \$ c P Z h * t x

Junction Creek Campground is 5 miles northwest of Durango and can be accessed from Main Avenue by turning west on 25th Street. Go 3.5 miles to the National Forest boundary, then 1.5 miles on Forest Rd. 171 to the campground on your left. The campground is on a south-facing hillside with Junction Creek 1/4 mile below. Skilled fishermen may have luck near the campground, but chances improve upstream. Four camping loops have 46 campsites (4 are double sites), and 14 offer electrical hookups. The day-use loop has 2 group picnic sites; one can accommodate up to 50 people, the other 75. These can be reserved through the National Reservation System. A pavillion, horseshoe pits, volleyball court and electrical hookups are provided. Two family picnic sites are available on a first-come, first-served basis.

• **ANIMAS OVERLOOK** P t h

Forest Rd. 171 continues north from Junction Creek Campground, making its way 6 miles up to the Animas Overlook. The gravel road is passable by most passenger vehicles, but is narrow and winding. Drivers should drive slowly with care and beware of washboard surfaces, especially on corners and steep portions. The parking lot for the Animas Overlook is paved, with barrier-free toilets. Picnic facilities are fully accessible. A paved interpretive trail, paved with gentle slopes for wheelchair use, offers an easy 3/4-mile loop to an overlook with great views of the Animas Valley and mountains to the north. Forest Road 171 continues past the overlook along the ridge and dead-ends northeast of Kennebec Pass. Several trails lead into the Hermosa Creek and Junction Creek Basins, including the Colorado Trail on its way to Molas Pass, and eventually Denver.

HERMOSA AREA

• **LOWER HERMOSA** C \ t

This small campground has 19 campsites, some for horse use only. Tables and fire grates are at each site. A toilet is in the parking lot adjacent to the Hermosa Creek Trailhead. The parking lot is large enough for vehicles and horse trailers, and offers access to the Jones Creek and Hermosa Creek trails. The Hermosa Trail follows the creek 19 miles uphill through the Hermosa Roadless Area to Hermosa Park. It is a multiple-use trail popular with mountain bikes, horseback riders, hikers, fishermen, and motorbikes.

LA PLATA CANYON

From Durango, go 12 miles west on U.S. Highway 160. Turn north on County Rd. 124 at Hesperus and go 5 miles. The paved road turns to gravel at the National Forest boundary. Access to campgrounds is by 2WD gravel road. The road heads up the canyon for 8 miles to the Kennebec Pass Scenic Overlook at 11,600 feet. The last few miles are high-clearance 4WD with steep drop-offs. Several trails access the backcountry from the pass. Camping is allowed only in developed campgrounds and designated camping sites. In identified dispersed campsites, campfires are allowed only in metal fire grates provided. Toilets are offered at the Miners Cabin, Madden and La Plata City Dispersed Camping Areas. Bear-safe food storage is mandatory in campgrounds and dispersed camping sites. La Plata Canyon has much private property - use a map and do not trespass.

• **SNOWSLIDE CAMPGROUND** \$ C *

Snowslide Campground is 6 miles up the canyon from U.S. Highway 160 and adjacent to the La Plata River with entrances on both sides of the road. Its 13 sites are well shaded. The maximum RV size is 35 feet. There is no potable water, but you can get water from Kroeger Campground. There is no trash pickup; trash must be packed out. Bear-safe camping, as in all San Juan campgrounds, is mandatory.

• **KROEGER CAMPGROUND** \$ C Z *

Up the road 1 mile is Kroeger Campground, with 10 campsites on 2 shaded acres. You can fish in the nearby La Plata River, but success rates are only fair. Expect cool summer nights at this elevation. There is no trash pickup; trash must be packed out. Most sites do not accommodate larger RVs. Private property is adjacent to the campground - do not trespass.